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A Trip Down Memory Lane: How photograph insertion methods trigger emotional memory and enhance recall during interviews

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Abstract

The purpose of the chapter is to explore the potential of photo-elicitation as a data generating method. Photo-elicitation is rarely used for data generation, despite the considerable promise of this method. Our empirical investigation focused on people's emotions and experiences of dual systems in Kazakhstan, a country currently undergoing change from the old-Soviet system to a new market economy. In addition to semi-structured interviews, we use photographs in order to enhance emotional connection and recall. We use the imagery as a device to generate data, and more specifically, data on individual and social perspectives that are integral to particular experiences. We argue that photo-elicitation can bring out peoples' lived experiences of the social context being investigated. We explain why and how to use the method in practice.

Introduction

In organisation studies, there is an emerging interest in visual methods, and an associated body of work that illustrates the power of this approach (Boxenbaum et al., 2018; Mayer, et al., 2013; Ray and Smith, 2011; 2012; Davison et al., 2012; 2015, Warren, 2009; 2005). While there are several different methods, including the use of drawings and video-ethnography (Vince and Warren, 2012; Jarrett and Liu, 2018), our focus is on photo-elicitation and its potential as a data-generation device. Photographs are used as part of data collection, but they are mainly valued for what images depict or what the viewer interprets while looking at them (Ray and Smith, 2012; Vince and Warren, 2012; Warren, 2005). There is currently very little information for researchers on how to use photos within the research process, and on the different aspects of data they are able to generate, for example, in comparison to interviews.

In this chapter we discuss a study that initially employed semi-structured interviews and then, at the end of each interview, used photo-elicitation to engage participants in a dialogue (see also Warren, 2002). This provided us with an opportunity to consider the data available both before and after the use of this method, and to offer comparisons between the lived experiences that were communicated through verbal and visual methods. Meyer and her colleagues (2013) argue that approaches that encourage dialogue are underused and that existing studies tend to be limited to methodological papers. We address this shortcoming by using an empirical study to

demonstrate the potential of photo-elicitation as a data-generating device. We found that photo-elicitation significantly enabled respondents' expression of their emotional experience and transformed the interviews.

We outline our approach to photo-elicitation, illustrating the value of the method using data from a study of peoples' lived experience and orientation towards organizational change in Kazakhstan. We discuss the implications of such an approach, focusing on its possible contributions to research in management and organization studies. We are making a methodological contribution by showing how to use photos to enrich qualitative research designs based on interviews. The rest of the chapter is organised as follows. We provide a short review of the literature on photo-elicitation methods and we explain our development of the method. We describe our example of using this method in detail and explain why we decided to structure our data collection in this way. Our findings illustrate the value of the approach by comparing the verbal and visual data. We finish the chapter by reflecting on the implications of the approach and what it can add to organizational research methods.

Literature Review

Using both visual and verbal methods as part of qualitative research interviews can improve the richness of the data (Boxenbaum et al., 2018; Mayer et al., 2013). Photographs have been used to study organisations, through the semiotic study of photographs or the elicitation of responses to images (Davison et al., 2012; 2015). The former relates to what a photograph depicts and how it reflects social reality (Mayer et al., 2018), whereas with the latter, the focus is on eliciting respondents' reflection on a photograph, providing access to what people make of the image in front of them (Ray and Smith, 2012). In this chapter, our focus is on photo-elicitation – how photographs can be utilised as a tool to elicit different but complementary data alongside semi-structured interview questions.

Photo-elicitation is a method of data collection that involves introducing a photographic image during the course of an interview (Harper, 2002). The approach is used to bring out *associative* aspects of peoples' lived experience, in addition to their descriptions of experience that arise from interviews (Sievers, 2008). The idea of associative experience recognizes 'that we are all part of a matrix of relations in a social group, where certain ways of perceiving reality are impressed on the individuals without proper conscious awareness of that influence' (Stamenova and Hinshelwood, 2018 p 2). Our sense of self in organizations is formed both knowingly and unknowingly, and our associations with an image can stimulate the articulation of emotions and relations that are characteristic of a social context.

Different sources of photographs

The researcher or research participant, or both, may produce photographs used in photo-elicitation; they may be archival images; or a combination of archival and 'live' images (Ray and Smith, 2012). *Participant produced photographs* are used to provide a strong voice to the research participant. The researcher asks respondents to take photos specifically for the interview, at which they are then discussed (Vince and Warren, 2012). This method is known as 'auto-driving' (Warren, 2005) because it is the respondent who chooses and produces the image,

as well as shaping the explanation and discussion of images, and the experiences and reflections they evoke. In this way, the method emphasizes the vision and voice of the research participant. For example, the method has been used to examine ‘how it feels to work here’ (Warren, 2002), and to uncover persons’ inner experience and perception of an organization (Sievers, 2008). This particularly relates to groups of people whose voices are silenced: inmates in a prison (Sievers, 2013), homeless people (Padgett et al., 2013), people undertaking ‘dirty work’ (Slutskaia et al., 2016), or those who suffer illness (Radley and Taylor, 2003).

Researcher produced photographs involve taking images that are subsequently used as an element of an interview. The images may represent aspects of the organization that is being studied or be associated directly with research participants. For example, Petersen and Østergaard (2004) studied knowledge sharing via photographs that depicted objects such as office facilities and workspaces. They asked employees to capture the knowledge sharing processes that were happening in their organization. Heisley and Levy (1991) investigated the consumer behaviour of respondents who had taken photographs during family dinners prior to the interviews. The photographs later helped respondents recall and remember product related associations, to see signs of role behaviour, power and conflicts associated with roles, and to visualize the power relations between the participants and people close to them.

Archival photographs can be selected from photo libraries, professional associations, organizational archives, visual data banks, online stock images and private archives (Ray and Smith, 2012). Such images are chosen to represent an element of the main topic of the research, and to encourage association and interpretation on this topic. For example, an image may be related to an historical event, one that can ‘trigger interviewee’s identification with the activities or phenomena represented and produce reminiscences about the general nature of work, beliefs, and practices in the particular location or industry during that historical period’ (Parker, 2009: 1117). Archival photographs produce interesting interpretations because they are as much about the present as they are the past. They stimulate here and now reflection on the current state, and they mobilize personal perceptions and projections, helping the respondent to position him or herself emotionally within the social or organizational issues being investigated (Kjellstrand and Vince, 2017; Warren, 2009).

Finally, researchers can utilise a combination of photographs produced by different sources (Ray and Smith, 2012). Researchers and research participants can jointly produce images of the same place prior to photo elicitation interviews. For example, when analysing photographs taken by a research group and a group of young prisoners on remand, Sievers (2013) noticed the paradoxical nature of what people show with their photos. According to this study, the photo taken by the researchers ‘showed a “pervasive beauty”, an aesthetic view of the uncanny, ugly, and frightening’ where the photos taken by the prisoners ‘were often reflective of the ugliness of the place, its incarnated violence, and were, thus, an expression of their hopelessness, lament, revolt, and despair’ (Sievers, 2013:139). In this study, the researchers and the research respondents each had their own purpose and own agenda, offering opportunities to stimulate dialogue.

Photographs as data; and photographs as a device to generate data

Photographs can be the data in the sense that they are derived, and initially analysed, by a respondent or respondents. For example, images taken by respondents can depict objects of interest to the research, which then form the basis for thematic analysis (Warren, 2005). Photographs serve as a cue to remember certain stories that otherwise might have been forgotten. In this way, ‘photographs, along with their layers of historical meaning, implicit in image makers’ intention, subjects’ representations and viewers’ interpretations, can play an important role in teasing out and the sense making of organizational complexity’ (Parker, 2009:1114), especially when the research question concerns the perception of participants (Tyson, 2009). Photographs can also be used as a device to stimulate broader conversations. For example, in their study of hair salon workers, Shortt and Warren (2017) analyse the meaning that photographs have for both the researchers and respondents who have taken photos; and they consider the broader field or sample level meanings interpreted from analysis of ‘image-sets’. Thus, photographs provide researchers and respondents with opportunities for in-depth reflection, creating an object that generates a ‘third-party effect’ (Warren and Parker, 2009). The inclusion of photographs during interviews shifts the emphasis from one-to-one interaction between researcher and respondent; and can decrease the power distance between them (Ray and Smith, 2012).

‘Projective’ photo-elicitation

The research that we discuss in this chapter used photographs as objects on which respondents could reflect. We introduced a device that encouraged respondents to *project* their feelings into two images that were chosen to represent two sides of peoples’ lived experience of different social systems. Our aim was to capture elements of the social and political context in which respondents were embedded, but to do this through their emotional investments in contrasting images. We found that respondents had very strong reactions to the contrasting images of Soviet and post-Soviet life. The images stimulated personalized experiences and preferences, tensions that were inherent in the transition from the old to the new system, and broader social and organizational dynamics relating to collective experience of these tensions. We discuss these in detail below.

Organisations are ‘driven, inhibited and guided by different emotions, including fear and hope, excitement and despair, curiosity and anxiety...’ (Antonacopoulou & Gabriel, 2001: 444). Scholars have used photographs to evoke emotions, and thereby to identify social emotions (emotions that tie communities together, see Creed, Hudson, Okhuysen and Smith-Crowe, 2014); as well as individual and social defenses against emotion that limit organizational members’ ability to act (Sievers, 2013; Warren, 2012, 2002). Our interest was also in the difference between emotional responses made in the interviews and in relation to the photographs, and our empirical design provided a unique opportunity to access this dynamic.

Indeed, one of the clearest aspects of our research was that there is a profound difference between life in the old Soviet and the new free market systems. However, we did not imagine that changes in socio-economic design had made a difference to the Soviet mentality in Kazakhstan, or that it was possible to eliminate Soviet era perceptions from free-market practices (Kjellstrand and Vince, 2017). Our interest was rather in the tensions mobilised between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ in order to comprehend the ways in which they combined both for people and for

organizations. In addition to peoples' experience of the tensions implicit in the process of transforming from one system to another, we sought to identify aspects of the (hybrid) dominant order that were reflected in social and organizational dynamics. How respondents interacted with colleagues emerged from projections onto the (imagined) relationships represented in our chosen images. Our interest, therefore, was to capture collective dynamics through respondents' association with the 'others' in the different images. By using them in this way, photographs can bridge 'the gap between the apparently individual, private, subjective and the apparently collective, social, political' (Samuels, 1993:63).

In using this method, we were seeking to explore three inter-related questions. First, what differences in expression of emotion could be identified by comparing our interview data with our photo-elicitation data? Second, how does photo-elicitation help us to comprehend different combinations of the 'old' and 'new' systems? Finally, how does photo-elicitation capture collective dynamics through respondents' associations?

The empirical study

The information gathered for this study is part of a larger empirical data set collected in 2014 at five organizations located in Kazakhstan. This is a country undergoing transformation from a Soviet system with a planned economy towards a capitalist free market economy. We conducted fifty-two semi-structured interviews for the research. At the end of each interview, we introduced a pair of photographs, one depicting an old Soviet workplace and the other a contemporary workplace (see photos 1 and 2, below). Our aim was to contrast the two sets of stimuli and encourage the participants to free associate their views of the old and the new. The two photographs were introduced to respondents at the same time and they were asked about what they felt while looking at them. Each participant spent around 10-15 minutes looking, talking and comparing these two photos, which resulted in 80 pages of transcribed data.

The interviews were conducted in either the Kazakh or Russian languages, depending on the preference of the participant. Twelve interviews were directly translated and transcribed by the first author, and the remaining forty were professionally transcribed, being later coded in their original languages. Any part of these that are cited in the chapter were translated into English at a later stage. Our coding process was inductive and emergent (Gioia et al., 2013). For our initial process of open coding we were specifically interested in capturing the various emotions people felt and expressed while looking at the photos. In our second round of coding, we categorized similar emotions into themes.

Description of photos we used during our photo-elicitation

Two photos were introduced to the participants at the end of each interview. The first (photo #1) was used to represent the Soviet workplace, specifically a teacher's room at a school. This photograph was sourced from a private archive. We offered it with the aim of showing the Soviet workplace, which represented the old times from which the organizations have been moving away.



Photo #1, a Soviet workplace – from a private archive

The second photo is used to depict a contemporary workplace (photo #2), namely an afternoon staff meeting. The photo was sourced from the Wikimedia Commons web site, which offers unlicensed photos for public use. The main purpose of showing this photo was to offer participants an image of the contemporary market economy workplace.



Photo #2: afternoon staff meeting – from Wikimedia Commons by Robert Scoble

Findings

Excerpts from three interviews are presented in this section to illustrate how photo-elicitation can bring out emotions, tensions and group dynamics. Although we conducted separate analyses for each method, the data we worked with include dynamics between people, and carry narratives that are complex and difficult to easily divide and separate following the theoretical concepts. In other words, data have been segmented here solely to simplify and organize our findings.

Vignette 1: Emotions projected onto the photographs

This interview proceeded in a positive tone and the participant, a camera operator, was talkative when discussing workplace relations and the details of his job. Marat (pseudonym) went into great technical details when describing his own work, which involved making short films, videos and photography. The participant described mostly positive work relations. According to him, workplace relations revolved around people helping each other, both within and outside work. In his words:

“We all work together. For instance, if I do not work, maybe work will not stop, maybe it stops a bit. But if our journalists do not work, then everything stops. I am telling you, journalists – they are the newspaper. They work, we help – they are the breadwinners... we facilitate their work – everything we can do for them; we help them with the photos. If necessary, I go and take a new photo or find something suitable from the archival photos or videos. If we have only old videos, and they need a photo on that topic, I do ‘stop cadre’ and take a photo of it for them; anything that is needed – I will get it for them! It is our common goal.” (Marat, a camera operator, Participant 34)

In the standard interview, the respondent conveys a strong sense that work relations at his organisation evolve around people helping each other. Marat values his journalist colleagues and appreciates their hard work. He describes himself as a supportive person, who facilitates their work and helps with everything the journalists may need. He feels personally responsible for providing photographs for the newspaper and he feels confident he can produce the required photo whatever it costs. It feels like he goes the extra mile to help his colleagues. When he speaks of this, his voice is calm, and he communicates a sense of solidarity. He is happy and proud to be part of the collective.

However, when the pair of photographs was introduced (photo #1 and #2), the participant’s emotional state changed. Strong and opposing feelings emerged as he looked at the images:

“You cannot compare these two photos, if you are asking ... This photo... (photo 2) here... I hate them, these ones... (he speaks louder) None of them can do the job! Look at the way he sits, here, you can see immediately... One leg on the other, hands are like this... (loathsome tone of voice, speaks fast and with scorn). One should be modest, like there (showing the black-and-white photo; voice is calm.) Like them. These guys, they really worked hard. Those were the days when people really worked hard. (Back to photo 2) What is this?! (voice speaks louder) As if he sits at home, isn’t this an office?! I noticed that immediately, from the second they entered the office, smoking... smoking in the office that is too much...” (Camera operator).

Marat suggests that the people depicted in photo 2 cannot do their job. The participant says that the way that the people are sitting in the photo is wrong. He is angry towards those who do not do the job at work. The tone of his voice is high, the way he describes the photo is intense, and he is scornful when speaking about this photo. He compares the people he is angry with in photo 2 with those in photo 1 who are seen as modest and hard working. When he describes photo 1,

his voice is calm and proud. His reaction to photo 2 indicated this participant's dislike of the new work order and his preference for the old one. His projections onto the images allowed him to *locate* himself on one side in a way that was not apparent within the interview. This was particularly represented by the emotional intensity of his reaction to the photos, in contrast to the positive tone of the interview. The photograph thus elicited data beyond the data generated by the interview alone by generating intense and revelatory emotions.

Vignette 2: Tensions projected onto the photographs

Our second example is from an interview conducted with a deputy headmistress, Aisha, at a school situated in a small village. Aisha was an open and talkative person, who eagerly shared her views on workplace relations and the socially shared rules there. She described her community as caring, where colleagues supported each other in any situation. She gave an example, when a colleague needed a new placard/poster and they did not have any budget for it. 'All colleagues gathered a bit of money each and ordered the placard from the nearest city via a taxi'. She also explained that the community could be divided into young, middle aged, and older teachers. Whilst the young teachers were those who had worked there only for one or two years, the older ones were those who had a couple of years left until retiring. The middle-aged teachers had been working there for a substantial amount of time and made up the bulk of the group. A story offered by the respondent as an example of tensions at work during the interview concerns the scheduling at work and the attitude of teachers:

"Older teachers... they seem to react to any decision I make. They seem to get offended easily, I think, and they complain. I made the schedule for the next semester the other day. I tried to accommodate all the teachers, take into consideration their needs. For instance, younger teachers have kids, they need to cook and take care of their kids when they come home. So, I put a couple of gap hours in the teaching schedule for the older teachers. [It seems teachers prefer to teach all their classes one after another and go home, instead of having gaps in between and have longer working days]. So, they complained, as I heard afterwards. 'Isn't it better with a little bit of a time in between your classes? So, they could prepare for the next class instead of doing it at home.' No, they do not want gaps between their classes! Such things create conflict between us. But I try to keep silent and not to talk too much; what can I do?" (Aisha, Deputy Headmistress, Participant 11a)

The participant justifies her reasons behind the scheduling by saying that she is trying to take each teacher's family situation into consideration. Aisha scheduled the classes of younger teachers consecutively and those of older teachers with gaps. Even though she tried her best, she could not satisfy everyone, and those who had gap hours between their classes complained. She wanted to avoid conflict with the teachers, and she was ready to remain silent to avoid further escalation. She also highlighted the importance of keeping positive relations between all the teachers and mentioned that, 'one cannot shout and order them about', because 'I want to be on good terms with all of them'.

After the photos were introduced, she recognised that they depicted the old and new systems, and she described her views on the two. Unlike in vignette #1, she did not display any strong

emotions towards the photos. Rather, she mentioned the technical differences between the old Soviet and the new times, with photo 2 leading her to talk about the technological advancements in teaching and various new possibilities new technology brought to the profession. When Aisha was asked about the differences she saw in the photos, she did not contrast them, but rather, explained how they seemed to complement each other. She raised some issues about the older and younger teachers, projecting what she thought of the former onto photo 1 and her thoughts regarding younger teachers onto photo 2:

“Everybody is by themselves. They are scowling. They seem to be a bit selfish and callous. Everybody is by himself or herself... I think so... yes... the young (teachers) do not want to say what they know. The older (teachers) do not want to write the papers. Maybe they do not have time sometimes... here the young teachers seem greedy and do not care about others (pointing at photo 2). We (middle aged teachers?) give away what we have in our hands, but the young teachers are tough, they do not give anything away.” (Deputy Headmistress)

This participant does not consider the photos separately. She associates them with the tensions between the older and younger teachers in the school. She feels that the people in both of the photos are ‘by himself or herself’. This had a negative tone when spoken. In the interview, she glossed over the tensions within the school and emphasized what a strong community it is. She was able to delve deeper into these tensions using the photos. The people in the images became her own colleagues (both young and old) and she used the photo to communicate that they appear to be selfish and callous. The young teachers do not want to say what they know, and the older teachers do not do what they are asked to do. In the interview, while she divided her colleagues into three groups, overall, she focused on the positive, emphasizing her wanting ‘to be on good terms with all of them.’ During the photo-elicitation, it was possible to also express and delve into the negative thoughts she had about them. She also mentioned in the photo-elicitation that ‘we give away what we have in our hands’, referring to the group of teachers she belongs to as being generous, as compared to the young ones, who seem to be more selfish. This does not align with her engrained value of teaching involving generosity towards colleagues. The older teachers are also resistant to her view of what they should be doing. Neither group complies with her sense of the social rules, and therefore the imagined cohesiveness of the community fades in the second part of the interaction, supported by photo elicitation.

Vignette 3: Social and organisational dynamics projected onto the photographs

In an interview with Maya, a teacher, the respondent was positive about her workplace. When she was asked whether her workplace was any different to other similar workplaces, she said that it was much more interesting to work here. ‘I would not go elsewhere even if they invited me’. Maya also said that ‘being a teacher means a lot of responsibility and there are other positive aspects to being a teacher as well’. She seemed to like being a teacher and being in her particular workplace. She spoke about working together and that people were polite and respectful of each other.

“There are certain social rules and regulations in the collective... generally the relationship among colleagues is not bad at all... People do not speak bad of each

other... Nobody says 'you are wrong'; people just politely mention if there is anything that needs to be said. Even if there are issues among members, we try to solve the problems right there without making a big deal out of it. People talk to each other; they explain what is what." (Maya, Teacher, Participant 5)

During the interview, Maya described the relations between collective members as positive. People are agreeable and try to see things in a positive light. They are open with each other and would aim to solve any problem together, 'right there without making a big deal of it'. Her perspective changed when the photographs were introduced. The images sparked a reflection about one particular staff member, the school psychologist:

Between you and me... I do not like the way our current psychologist works. I even mentioned that in the previous teachers' meeting. She gives questionnaires to the students, and if they get any negative response about someone, they come and blame us (teachers)... if someone gets F; it is the teacher's fault... Then, 'there was a better teacher last year, this teacher is not good enough' is the story among parents. I wrote about it in the questionnaires, but nobody acts upon our feedback. If only we could work together, think together... that is our problem here... I cannot say what I think; if I say that, they [other teachers] will talk about it in their own circles. They do not talk openly and try to solve the problem; instead, they blame the person who pinpointed the issue. Then, I hear about it from someone else. They upset me, I upset them; we upset each other." (Teacher)

Maya resented the ways in which the school psychologist used questionnaire results, mentioning that it affected the way parents reacted to them. She regretted that nobody seemed to respond to her own feedback on the questionnaires. Things had escalated, with some of her colleagues taking the side of the psychologist, and some parents blaming her for the students' poor grades. Teachers were divided, discussing the problem separately with like-minded colleagues without openly talking about it. Discussing it behind each other's backs, they became caught up in blame. She explained how working together seemed to be a problem for her, because the workplace was unable to find a solution together. It seemed to her that the person pinpointing a problem was likely to get the blame for it. While in the interview she described her school as an interesting place to work, in the photo-elicitation, she started to delve into greater depth, revealing other dynamics.

Discussion and Conclusion

Our purpose in this chapter is to discuss the potential of photo-elicitation as a data generating device. We have used our experience from an empirical research project to show how semi-structured interviews and photo-elicitation worked together to produce richer data. In particular, we found that these methods brought out respondents' emotions in different ways, and that this made for interesting comparisons between the findings from these two qualitative approaches. We were struck by the intensity of emotion and strong associations that emerged from respondents' engagement with the photographs, and the difference from their response to interview questions, which tended to be more controlled and positive.

We make a methodological contribution by showing how to use photos to enrich qualitative research designs based on interviews. In our experience, the use of photographs at the end of the interview produced data with more emotional intensity and directness from respondents. The emotional conflicts that they felt in relation to their co-workers or towards their organizations seemed to us to be a more honest reflection of tensions within the Kazakhstan social system. We would argue that (within our research context) photo-elicitation was most effective in drawing out peoples' lived experience of the social context being investigated. Having reflected on our experience, we think that there were two main advantages of using photo-elicitation in combination with semi-structured interviews in our study.

First, respondents expressed their emotions more freely during the photo-elicitation. The interviews tended to be conversational, affording respondents the opportunity to offer thoughts, opinions and narratives of their experience. They were professionals, who were fluent in their distinct professional discourses. Of course, these conversations were not free from emotion. However, when the photographs were introduced, we found that most of our respondents became more emotionally charged and less constrained in their responses. The images had the effect of delving deeper into participants' responses because they so vividly represented within the social system (changing from a Soviet to a post-soviet economy). This helped us to show how embedded these structural tensions are in the lived experience of professional workers.

The photographs brought out negative and complex emotions, which were generally absent or glossed over during interview conversations. Respondents associated the photographs with their own experience, taking them into the space between their personal emotions and their professional role. This space has been called 'the organisation in the mind' (Armstrong, 2005; Kjellstrand and Vince, 2017). This refers to the ways in which individuals respond to their experience within organizations, how implicit rules and expectations become personalised/internalised, and therefore to the emotions that tie people to organizations in similar and different ways. For example, in an interview it can be difficult to uncover someone's dislike towards a colleague or job situation. Our respondents tended to be positive in their answers when asked about work dynamics, even when they were sharing negative experiences. Using photo-elicitation allowed participants to speak what was actually in their minds. A comparison between words used in the interview and the photo-elicitation illustrate this change: 'they complain' becomes 'they are scowling'; 'we facilitate their work' becomes 'I hate them!'; and 'we try to solve the problems right there' becomes 'I cannot say what I think'.

Second, as we studied a system in the process of change (in between the 'old' and the 'new'), photo-elicitation helped to comprehend different combinations of peoples' lived experience of the old and the new that co-existed within what is, in effect, a hybrid or dual system. Associating the two images uncovered ongoing tensions entwined with the process of change. For example, one respondent compared the two photographs and highlighted the technical differences between them. One image was associated with the pen-and-paper period and the other with the 'new' more technologically advanced times. The respondent expressed her wish to have better technical equipment, to be able to rise up to the expected standards of the new system. Another respondent made a similar association and added that 'there is a TV in the photo – if we had such a TV and (we could) hold some interesting activities, our motivation would improve'. As with other professional areas, the school system in Kazakhstan is undergoing considerable reform

requiring fundamental changes. Her narrative tells us something specific about the current state of systemic changes and about her simultaneous experience of the ‘old’ and ‘new’ times.

While these two points reflect our experience of the difference between semi-structured interviews and photo-elicitation in our research, we also believe that such designs can be more generally useful in management and organization studies. Ray and Smith (2012) have highlighted the scarcity of photographic research methods that explore processes in organisations. We think that photo-elicitation is a useful method for researchers seeking to capture established and emerging dynamics and processes through respondents’ associations, alongside their personal perceptions, ideas and assumptions. Respondents internalise the photographs and interpret them by associating their actual and imagined content with their own stories (Warren, 2005). These stories frequently involve the groups to which people belong, the relationships between people, and the social context within which these relationships take place. Simply put, respondents both perceive the organization in the images, and feel their experience of it. Our view is that photo-elicitation is therefore potentially important in the development of themes and issues pertaining to intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of organisational processes as people engage with the possibilities and impossibilities of change.

We think that there are particular areas of management and organization studies that could benefit from the integration of photo-elicitation into an overall qualitative research design. The most obvious of these relates to the study of emotion in organization and to the relationship between emotion and reason. A design based on interviews alone is more than capable of generating insights into individual and collective emotion, and the rational structures that contain them (see Vince, 2006 for an example). However, our research suggests that photo-elicitation is helpful in producing data at the interface of emotion and *structure*. This makes it particularly relevant as a method for the study of social emotions, which are ‘emotions that pertain to the state of the social relations... that hold communities together in institutional processes (Creed et al, 2014: 276). We think that photo-elicitation will be useful to researchers with an interest in studying the interplay between processes of organization and subjectification.

To conclude, we have had an experience of using photo-elicitation that has made us enthusiastic about recommending this method, especially where it is set alongside other qualitative methods. We think that the approach offers the potential for increased access to the depth or intensity of the emotional experience being studied. We have particularly emphasized the value of the *projective* qualities of the images in our context. The chosen images mobilised very powerful associations for respondents and provided us with insights about personal and social emotions (fear, anger, disappointment) embedded within peoples’ attempts to move from one system to another. Photo-elicitation is a device that researchers can utilise in the service of comparison between participant responses within interviews and the underlying emotions that both infuse and confuse their experiences. We encourage other researchers to explore the generative potential of photo-elicitation methods.

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